

News Release



News Release

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Project Prepare- Countdown to Hurricane Season

With the start of hurricane season only one month away, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties are joining together to help residents prepare for the upcoming hurricane season with "Project Prepare- Countdown to Hurricane Season." Project prepare offers residents simple tips on how to prepare their family and homes for the hurricane season which begins June 1 and ends November 30. A tip will be provided for each day during the month of May.

Despite very active hurricane seasons over the last 10 years, our area has been very fortunate to have no major storm impact since Hurricane Dennis in 2005. It is easy to become complacent, but residents are reminded that no matter how many storms are predicted in a hurricane season, it only takes one storm to change our lives dramatically. Everyone has a responsibility to be self sufficient for three to five days. Do not wait until a storm enters the Gulf of Mexico to prepare.

For more information on "what to do" before, during and after a disaster visit www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency or www.bereadyescambia.com.

Project Prepare- Countdown to Hurricane Season Daily Tips

- May 1** The first 72 are on you! If a disaster strikes, will you and your family know what to do? Have a plan and discuss it with your family. Learn more at www.ready.gov.
- May 2** In a disaster, children, elderly and pets are more at risk. Don't forget to include special plans to meet their needs in your family disaster plan.
- May 3** Identify an out-of-town emergency contact and be sure every member of your family knows the phone number in case you are separated from your loved ones.
- May 4** Get a Kit! Assemble a disaster kit that allows you to be self-sustaining for three to five days. Learn more at www.ready.gov.
- May 5** Your disaster kit should have a three to five day supply of water on hand for each person and pet- one gallon per day/per person and pet- in your household.
- May 6** Buy an extra can or other non-perishable food item when you shop this month, then put it on a separate shelf. You need enough supplies to feed your family for three to five days.
- May 7** Check your disaster kit for expired food, drinks or medications. Restock as needed.
- May 8** Take medications regularly? Don't let your supplies run low. Keep extra medications and health aids when possible. Make sure you have at least two weeks of prescription medicine if a storm is threatening.

- May 9** Visit your county's web page for disaster information before, during and after a disaster. Save it in your website favorites so you don't have to search when you need it.
Santa Rosa County – www.santarosa.fl.gov
Escambia County – www.bereadyescambia.com
- May 10** Keep a battery powered or windup radio on hand so that you can receive instructions on what to do or where to go during a disaster.
- May 11** Check flashlights to make sure they are working and have a supply of replacement batteries in your disaster kit.
- May 12** Inspect your trees before a storm strikes. Prevent damage by trimming trees and removing dead limbs or branches. Do not "top" your trees as that may weaken the tree. Consider removing trees that are decayed, hollow, aged, significantly leaning or that have cracks in the trunk.
- May 13** Know when and how to go. Check to see if your home is in an evacuation zone. Know the evacuation routes, including an alternate route.
Santa Rosa County – www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency
Escambia County – www.bereadyescambia.com
- May 14** If you live in an evacuation zone or mobile home, plan now where you will go during a storm. You don't have to drive hundreds of miles out of town. Ask family or friends, find a hotel in a safe area of the county, or know where the public shelters are and how to get there.
- May 15** Understand the difference between a weather watch and warning and the actions you need to take for each.
- May 16** Learn how to shut off your water, gas and electricity properly. Know where to find shut-off valves and switches. Keep the area free of obstructions like storage items or grass/plants.
- May 17** Your best defense in any disaster is a NOAA Weather Radio. It is inexpensive and programmable for area specific information. Equip your home and workplace with a weather radio- it may just save your life.
- May 18** Keep important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container or scan them and save on a flash drive, discs or external backup devices.
- May 19** Make sure you have a plan to care for your pet if you evacuate or stay at a pet friendly shelter. In Santa Rosa County, you should pre-register your pets to use the pet friendly shelter. For more information call (850) 983-4680 for Santa Rosa and (850) 595-3075 for Escambia County.
- May 20** Business owners- do you have a plan for how to continue business operations if a hurricane affects our area? Are you prepared to manage the five "P's" - people, property, products, processes, and partners? A business continuity plan can answer these questions and more. It can help you stay operational even if disaster affects your business. Once you create a plan, be sure to make every employee aware of his or her responsibilities.
- May 21** Take photos or videos of your home and valuables from all angles and keep hard or electronic copies with your important papers. Your property may not look the same once the storm passes.
- May 22** Learn how you can help your community before, during and after a disaster strikes. Get CERT or Community Emergency Response Team training. For more information visit www.citizencorps.gov/cert.

- May 23** Know how to contact your county's Citizen Information Center. During a disaster, staff will be available to take your call. Santa Rosa CIC: (850) 983-4636, Escambia CIC: (850) 471-6600.
- May 24** If you plan to utilize the special needs shelter, you should pre-register. In Santa Rosa call (850) 983-5360; Escambia call (850) 471-6400.
- May 25** Have a small amount of cash available at all times. If the power is out, ATMs and store credit card machines may not work.
- May 26** Prepare your home now. Examine your roof for loose or broken shingles that need to be repaired. Clear clogged rain gutters and down spouts.
- May 27** Check your insurance coverage; flood losses aren't usually covered by your homeowners' insurance policy. Floodwaters can damage your home and your financial future. Learn about the National Flood Insurance Program at 1-888-379-9531 or www.floodsmart.gov.
- May 28** Prepare to keep your home safe now. Sand bags and tarps can be purchased year round at local supply and hardware stores.
- May 29** Don't wait for a storm to be in the Gulf of Mexico for protective window coverings like plywood sheets. Buy and cut now, or even better, purchase hurricane shutters. Taping windows does not prevent windows from breaking or flying debris from entering your home.
- May 30** If you plan to use a generator, make sure you have a CO detector, gas cans, inverters, extension cords, fuel stabilizers and lubricants on hand before a storm strikes. Never use a generator inside!
- May 31** Are you ready? Learn more about how to prepare for a hurricane or any disaster. Santa Rosa residents, pick up the county's annual disaster guide in county offices, libraries or local retailers or visit www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency. Escambia residents visit www.bereadyescambia.com.

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